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 Jordanian-Communist Contacts  
 10 April, 1970  
 RECEIVED IN  
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### Jordanian-Communist Contacts

This letter is an attempt at a round-up of the major overt Communist contacts, visits and activities in Jordan during the first three months of this year. The most important of these was the visit of the Mufti of the Soviet Union, about which I wrote to you separately on 19 March.

2. Soviet Contacts In early January a fourteen-member delegation from the Soviet Arab Friendship Association visited Amman for four days, "to study the living conditions of the refugees and to witness the steadfastness of the Jordanian people". The delegation was received by the Prime Minister and the Secretary-General of the Youth Welfare Organisation. Mr. George Brown's visit coincided with the first two days of the delegation's stay here, and attracted much more publicity and comment. A Soviet Civil Aviation delegation visited Jordan from 6 to 10 February. It was announced at the time that a Civil Aviation Agreement had been initialled, and that the Soviet Union had expressed a wish to start air services between Jordan and the Soviet Union from April. However, we understand that any agreement that was reached was far from specific, that Alia has no intention of starting a service to Moscow, and that the Aeroflot service to Amman will for the time being not amount to anything more than occasional special flights.

3. The Soviet-Jordanian Cultural Agreement is showing further fruit. Ad-Dustour reported on 4 March that the Ministry of Education was making approaches to the Soviet authorities with a view to sending officials to study the educational system in the USSR. They would also invite the Director

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of higher education in the USSR to Jordan. The Youth Organisation is planning various "manifestations" later on this year involving troupes of the Soviet dancers, etc. who will be brought here under the Cultural Agreement. I have not yet been able to obtain further details.

4. Other Communist Contacts A North Korean press delegation did the rounds from 3 to 12 February and handed out booklets about Kim il-Sung, translated into appalling English. This visit was made, we assume, in return for a Jordanian press visit to North Korea about a year ago. It made very little impact here.

5. The Bulgarians seem to be making an effort to get in on the act. A group of Jordanian petroleum refinery workers left for Bulgaria on 10 March for a three week "cultural course of training". The Bulgarian Government has also informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of their readiness to conclude a Land Transport Agreement with Jordan. (Frozen chickens come here by road in Bulgarian lorries and perhaps on to Iraq and Saudi Arabia). A Jordanian delegation has been invited to visit Sofia this month to discuss the matter. The Americans have told us that the Bulgarians are also interested in a Civil Aviation Agreement with Jordan, but we have no direct information on this yet.

6. Contacts with Western European Communist Parties A Fatah delegation attended, and spoke at, the Conference of the French Communist Party in Paris in early February. A return visit, about which no details are known, was made by a group of French Communists in March. The Italian Communist Party sent a delegate to speak at the meeting of Jordanian Womens' Organisation held on 8 March on the occasion of the "Day of Solidarity with Palestinian Women". Her name was variously reported as Mrs. Dina Forkey (Jordan News Agency), and Mrs. Zimaformi (BBC).

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7. Communist Contacts with the Fedayeen You will already have seen reports on the visit to Moscow in February of a PLO delegation led by Yaser Arafat, at the invitation of the Soviet Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity. Apart from enigmatic comments about the snow in Moscow being warm, made by Arafat at a press conference on his return, nothing new has emerged publicly. The fairly low level tone of the visit contrasts with the visit that Yaser Arafat has just made to China and North Vietnam, where his hosts seem to have laid on full Head of State treatment.

8. Internal Communist Activity A Jordanian Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and a Jordanian World Peace Committee have recently been formed. Both are under the chairmanship of Suleiman al-Nabulsi, an ageing politician, who while far from being a Communist, is well known for his Left Wing leanings and his friendship towards the USSR, which he visited last year. He is Vice-Chairman of the Soviet Jordanian Friendship Association and a member of the Committee of the East German Jordanian Friendship Association.

9. Internal Communist Activity - Fedayeen You will already have seen reports concerning the establishment of a new fedayeen group, the "Al-Ansar" or partisan forces. The group first surfaced in Amman, though it is also said to be active (or at least alive) in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. It is clear that the Communist Parties of these four countries are behind it. It has applied for membership of the Unified Command. We have heard that the first application was rejected - and that they will apply again when they have one or two operations to their credit.

10. Conclusions None of the visits or contacts at a governmental level during the past three months have been particularly spectacular but it is now clear, as John Shepherd suggested in his letter to you of 14 November 1969, that contacts with the Soviet bloc are now accepted and respectable here. The influence of the Prime Minister is no doubt partly

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responsible. The Soviet effort to influence the Youth Organisation is disturbing, for at the moment they have no competition in this field.

11. The Soviet attitude towards the fedayeen movement seems to be undergoing an interesting change. Until recently the Communist attitude was lukewarm. In part, certainly, this attitude sprang from the fedayeen's rejection of the November 1967 Security Council Resolution, a view which Moscow was unwilling to endorse. Last autumn leaflets began to appear issued by the Jordanian Communist Party which said, inter alia, that "all national progressive forces and commando organisations should unite themselves in one struggling front". Following Yaser Arafat's visit to Moscow it seems that Al-Fatah, at any rate, has been accorded the status of a legitimate National Liberation Movement. The creation of the Al-Ansar forces is presumably an attempt to ensure that the Communist Party is seen to be standing shoulder to shoulder with other "national progressive forces" in the struggle against Zionism and Imperialism. The Communists must still be in a dilemma, though, for Moscow can hardly wish to join publicly in rejecting the Security Council Resolution, nor can it wish to jeopardise too far its relations with the King and his Government. On the other hand, the Communists have no wish to be outflanked by a liberation movement in which Left-Wing influence is strong and may increase and in which the Chinese may endeavour to consolidate their influence. Relatively quiet and low-level treatment, such as that which marked Arafat's visit to Moscow, will probably be the style of Soviet-Fedayeen contacts for the immediate future.

Yours ever,

*C. P. Carter*

(C. P. Carter)

cc  
P. Joy Esq., O.B.E., Beirut  
Chancery, Moscow.

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Yes;  
and  
earlier.

R.E.

14/4.





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Near Eastern Department,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London S.W.1

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(LAST PAPER)

16 April, 1970.

Jordan-Communist Contacts

Thank you very much for your letter 3/7 of 10 April which we read with interest, as a most useful roundup of this subject. We have as yet no comments of substance but I thought you might like to know that it has been copied round the Office and generally appreciated. We should like to be kept in touch on this subject at convenient intervals.

(C.W. Long)

C.P. Carter, Esq.,  
Amman.

c.c. P. Joy, O.B.E.,  
Beirut.

(LAST PAPER)

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